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ABSTRACT

This national survey attempted to discover the feelings and perceptions of American viewers--about the roles of the media, about the degree of success broadcasters have as journalists and entertainers, about the appropriate relationship between government and broadcast programming, and about the acceptability of the commercial television systems. The first four chapters focus on: (1) trends in attitudes toward media between 1959 and 1976, (2) media in election years, (3) media compared to schools and government during social change, and (4) attitudes toward programs and commercials. The final chapter describes how the study was conducted. (Author/DAG)

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changing public attitudes toward television and other mass media 1959-1976

IT005-077

A report by
The Roper Organization, Inc.

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PREFACE

This series of reports, now numbering ten, reflects a commitment of this Office to the television medium and its viewing public. We continue to believe that each party to this ongoing national transaction in communication must be aware of the feelings of the other and that mutual awareness is the key to the communication process.

The decisions of broadcasters are made apparent in the programs they offer and in the trends these offerings reveal. Viewer behavior, in gross terms, is clearly discernible through program ratings, charting as they do the rise and fall in the popularity of performers, individual programs and program genres. These matters are widely discussed in the media and need no amplification here. There are, however, affective and qualitative aspects of television which require deeper study.

These national surveys have attempted to discover the feelings and perceptions of American viewers—about the roles of the media, about the degree of success broadcasters have achieved as journalists and entertainers, about the appropriate relationship between government and broadcast programming and about the acceptability of the commercial television system.

The eighteen-year life of this series was not pre-planned. The first study, although it touched on many subjects, was intended to serve primarily as a measure of the public's confidence in television in the aftermath of the so-called "quiz scandals" of that year. But public opinion researching is not

unlike peanut eating; once started, it's hard to stop. The 1959 data yielded interesting morsels—to the consumers as well as the producers of television fare—and a biennial appetite for more was born.

We have retained certain questions throughout the years. Others have been dropped when they no longer seemed relevant or when they failed to yield new, useful information. For example, for many years Roper had asked which mass medium respondents would keep if permitted to have only one. By 1972, it was clear that television's commanding lead was unassailable, and likely to remain stable, barring cataclysmic social events. None have occurred and the question is no longer asked. As times and circumstances have changed, new questions have been asked—about children's programs, about television and aggressive behavior, about government control, about aspects of advertising. When appropriate, these have been repeated to yield trend data.

In all, we have sought to provide to broadcasters, to government, to critics, to educators and to an increasingly media-conscious audience a range of perspectives and a needed measure of perspective which would be lacking were this means of public expression left unexplored.

May, 1977

ROY DANISH, Director
Television Information Office

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I

Trends in Attitudes Toward Television and Other Media: An Eighteen-Year Review

By Burns W. Roper

This series of studies, begun in 1959, has shown television increasingly becoming the dominant medium in people's lives. From a secondary position in 1959, television moved almost steadily upward in public regard and approval of its programming. After assuming a leading position in 1963, television steadily increased its lead in successive years, reaching a record high in 1974. This 1976 study shows television essentially in a holding position on levels of approval in the various comparative measurements.

The progress shown for television has been made during a period of turbulence and change in all aspects of American life. Today's lifestyles, social mores and customs are far different from those of 1959—mostly because of upheavals that occurred during the sixties. The seventies presented problems in different areas. There was the trauma of ending the Vietnam War, quick-

ly followed by Watergate and the resignation of President Nixon. Gerald Ford's ascendency to the Presidency brought a brief surge of optimism that was soon ended by increasing inflation and a recession that threatened to develop into a true depression. The public reacted with increasing cynicism and skepticism toward leadership and institutions, with increased demands for consumer protection and with increasing apprehension regarding the future. Now, however, other of our current studies show the tide of public confidence sharply on the rise. With signs of economic recovery, the public is beginning to show a more favorable attitude towards the institutions of society and a measurably more hopeful attitude about the future.

During these years, television has proved itself successful not only in meeting the challenges presented by demands for keeping up with changing times, but in providing services and entertainment of a caliber recognized by the public as essential to modern life. Entering what may be a new era in America, television is in a unique position to be an effective force in meeting the needs of the future.

At the same time there appears to be a slight weakening of support for the commercial system on which television is based and heightened sentiment for government control of programs. But these changes should be assessed in the context of the fact that approval of the commercial system still heavily outweighs disapproval, and respondents who want less government control of programs substantially outnumber those who want more.

The current study was almost equally divided between trend questions asked in past studies and questions asked for the first time.

Analysis of the results shows television holding its leading position with the American public. The public continues to regard television as the number one source of news, and by a wide margin. Television also continues to be the most believable medium. And as mentioned earlier, the public still largely rejects government regulation of TV programming, generally approves of the programming it gets on TV, and endorses the commercial system. The current study, however, shows some signs that the public is beginning to reflect or share increased special interest group criticism of program content and of the commercials that support them. This is particularly true with regard to children's programs and the commercials in them, a frequent target in recent years.

Source of News

Since the first study in 1959, all questions comparing the various media have been asked ahead of those questions that specifically focus on television, in order to avoid bias.

The first question in each study has asked people where they get most of their news. Television, which has led all other media on this question since 1963, continues to hold a sizeable lead, 15 points, over the second place medium—the widest ever except in 1974.

"First, I'd like to ask you where you usually get most of your news about what's going on in the world today—from the newspapers or radio or television or magazines or talking to people or where?"

Source of most news:	*12/59* %	*11/61* %	*11/63* %	*11/64* %	*1/67* %	*11/68* %	*1/71* %	*11/72* %	*11/74* %	*11/76* %
Television	51	52	55	58	64	59	60	64	65	64
Newspapers	57	57	53	56	55	49	48	50	47	49
Radio	34	34	29	26	28	25	23	21	21	19
Magazines	8	9	6	8	7	7	5	6	4	7
People	4	5	4	5	4	5	4	4	4	5
All mentions	154	157	147	153	158	145	140	145	141	144
Don't know or no answer (DK/NA)	1	3	3	3	2	3	1	1	-	-

Until 1972, newspapers had led television as the main source of news among the college educated. Since then, the two media have been almost even, with newspapers ahead by 2 points in 1972, television ahead by one point in 1974, and newspapers ahead by one point this year—58% to 57%.

In all studies multiple answers have been accepted when people have named more than one medium. Analysis of multiple responses showed television steadily increasing its lead as the single most-relied-upon medium up to 1974, with well over one-third mentioning only television in that year, and the same percentage again naming it alone this year.

Analysis of multiple responses	*12/59* %	*11/61* %	*11/63* %	*11/64* %	*1/67* %	*11/68* %	*1/71* %	*11/72* %	*11/74* %	*11/76* %
TV only	19	18	23	23	25	29	31	33	36	36
N'pers only	21	19	21	20	18	19	21	19	19	21
Both n'pers and TV (with or without other media	26	27	24	28	30	25	22	26	23	23
N'pers and other media but not TV	10	11	8	8	7	6	5	5	4	4
TV and other media but not n'pers	6	7	8	6	8	5	7	5	6	5
Media other than TV or n'pers	17	15	13	12	10	13	13	12	12	11
DK/NA	1	3	3	3	2	3	1	-	-	-

The Relative Credibility of Media

Since 1961, television has led as the most believable news medium, and in 1968 reached a two-to-one advantage over newspapers. By 1974, it had widened its margin over newspapers to a two-and-a-half-to-one advantage. This study shows it holding that lead by almost the same margin.

"If you got conflicting or different reports of the same news story from radio, television, the magazines and the newspapers, which of the four versions would you be most inclined to believe—the one on radio or television or magazines or newspapers?"

Most believable:	*12/59* %	*11/61* %	*11/63* %	*11/64* %	*1/67* %	*11/68* %	*1/71* %	*11/72* %	*11/74* %	*11/76* %
Television	29	39	36	41	41	44	49	48	51	51
Newspapers	32	24	24	23	24	21	20	21	20	22
Radio	12	12	12	8	7	8	10	8	8	7
Magazines	10	10	10	10	8	11	9	10	8	9
DK/NA	17	17	18	18	20	16	12	13	13	11

Trends in Hours of Viewing

Television viewing increased steadily between 1961, when we first asked about the amount of time individuals spent viewing television, and 1974 when it reached 3:02 hours daily. This year, viewing for the total sample, but not all sub-samples, shows a drop-off from 1974, to 2:53 hours. However, it appears that respondent perceptions in 1974 may have been distorted by events in that year (Nixon resigning, Ford assuming the Presidency, etc.). If the progression in amount of viewing time is looked at omitting 1974, the 1976 figure appears to be in line with the more gradual rise in time spent with television reflected in more precise measurements of this dimension of television usage, e.g., the A.C. Nielsen Company's reports.

While answers to this question are subject to respondents' reporting error, the trend results are meaningful, even if the absolute responses may be somewhat off the mark.

"On an average day, about how many hours do you personally spend watching TV?"

	11/61	*11/63*	*11/64*	*1/67*	*11/68*	*1/71*	*11/72*	*11/74*	*11/76*
Median hours of viewing	**2:17**	**2:34**	**2:38**	**2:41**	**2:47**	**2:50**	**2:50**	**3:02**	**2:53**

Television viewing by the college educated, while consistently below the national average each year, has been steadily increasing since 1961, except for a drop-off in 1972. There was a marked increase in viewing in 1974, however, which has held up this year. Reported television viewing has shown a similar pattern among the upper economic groups, although there is lower reported viewing this year than in the abnormally high 1974 period.

Median reported hours of viewing by:	*11/61*	*11/64*	*1/67*	*11/68*	*1/71*	*11/72*	*11/74*	*11/76*
College educated	**1:48**	**2:04**	**2:10**	**2:17**	**2:19**	**2:12**	**2:23**	**2:24**
Upper economic levels	**2:02**	**2:14**	**2:21**	**2:24**	**2:30**	**2:29**	**2:47**	**2:40**

II

Media in Election Years

In the five studies conducted between 1964 and 1972, people were asked after each of the five elections (three Presidential and two mid-term) about their sources of information on candidates running at different levels of government:

> *"During the last election campaign, from what source did you become best acquainted with the candidates for city (town) and county offices—from the newspapers or radio or television or magazines or talking to people or where? What about candidates for state offices? And what about the candidates for national offices—the Presidency, the Senate and the House of Representatives?"**

*The question about candidates for national offices was not included in the 1967 study. When asked following the mid-term election of 1970, the question read: "And what about candidates for national office—the Senate and the House of Representatives?"

In every year, newspapers led television in acquainting people with candidates for local offices. The results for state offices were less clear, although television led newspapers or was even with them in all studies. Television clearly overshadowed newspapers as a source for becoming acquainted with candidates for national office, whether in mid-term or Presidential election.

In earlier years there had been some question in our minds as to whether these questions may be imprecise because of inconsistent respondent interpretation of "local" vs. "state" vs. "national." (For example, are Congressmen thought of as "local" because they are elected only from their districts, or as "national" because they go to Washington? Are U.S. Senators thought of as "state" or "national"?)

Therefore, we asked differently-worded questions of half of the sample after the 1970 and 1972 elections, using what we felt to be clearer illustrations for the three levels of office.

Because the newer versions of the questions seemed to provide sharper answers, and in the same direction as the earlier versions, in the 1974 study we used the newer versions of the question only, omitting, of course, the Presidential mention in the national elections question. In the current study, we wished to try a further modification of these questions—one that asked not only about the candidates but also issues. Therefore, we asked the 1970–1974 version of half the sample, and somewhat differently worded questions, bringing in issues, of the other half of the sample.

The trend questions asked in the current study were:

"From what source did you become best acquainted with the candidates running in local elections—like mayor, members of the state legislature, etc.—from the newspapers or radio or television or magazines or talking to people or where? What about the candidates running in statewide elections—like U.S. Senator and Governor? And what about the candidates in the national election—for President and Vice President?"

In all studies since 1971 (as with the earlier versions of the question) newspapers led television in acquainting people with *local* candidates. It is interesting to note, however, that both newspapers and television are up as sources of information in this study, while "talking to people" has been steadily declining in recent years.

Local elections:	*11/71* %	*11/72* %	*11/74* %	*11/76* %
Newspapers	41	41	41	44
Television	27	31	30	34
Radio	6	7	8	7
People	19	23	14	12
Magazines	1	1	1	2
Other	5	5	5	6
Total mentions	99	108	99	105

In statewide elections, television continues to show a clear and increasing lead over newspapers. In both mid-term elections, 1974 and 1970, television was stronger relative to newspapers than in the 1972 Presidential election. In 1974, the report speculated that this could be characteristic of the two kinds of elections, and noted that another reading on a Presidential election would determine this more clearly. The current reading indicates that even if this is true, television is nevertheless increasing its already strong position with the public as a source of statewide election information.

Statewide elections:	*11/71* %	*11/72* %	*11/74* %	*11/76* %
Television	51	49	48	53
Newspapers	29	39	33	35
Radio	6	7	6	5
People	10	9	6	6
Magazines	2	1	1	1
Other	4	3	3	3
Total mentions	102	108	97	103

Television increasingly overshadows newspapers as a source for becoming acquainted with candidates for national office, with television at a record lead over newspapers in the 1976 election—quite likely due to this past year's Presidential and Vice Presidential television debates.

National election:	*11/72* %	*11/76* %
Television	66	75
Newspapers	26	20
Radio	6	4
People	5	3
Magazines	5	5
Other	2	1
Total mentions	110	108

These three questions confirm as well as clarify results seen in the past. Newspapers appear to be the most important medium in local elections, although television is rising in importance. Both newspapers and television are important in statewide elections with television increasingly more so than newspapers. Past studies have shown television is dominant in national elections, and its margin of dominance has increased markedly in the current study.

Variations of the Election Questions

To explore the effect of asking about issues as well as candidates in these questions, we asked differently worded questions of half the sample in this study.

"From what source did you become best acquainted with the candidates and issues in local elections—candidates and issues in races like mayor, members of the state legislature, etc.—from the newspapers or radio or television or magazines or talking to people or where? What about the candidates and issues in statewide elections—races like U.S. Senator and Governor? And what about the candidates and issues in the national election—the race for President and Vice President?"

As with the first version of the question; newspapers led television in acquainting people about local elections, but the introduction of "issues" in the question strengthened newspapers' lead over television.

Local candidates and issues:	*11/76* %
Newspapers	46
Television	31
People	15
Radio	8
Magazines	2
Other	4
Total mentions	106

Similar results were shown with regard to statewide elections. Television clearly led newspapers as a source of information, but including "issues" in the question slightly decreased television's lead.

Statewide candidates and issues:	*11/76* %
Television	50
Newspapers	36
People	6
Radio	6
Magazines	2
Other	2
Total mentions	102

Answers to this different version of the question at the national level clearly confirms television's dominance, but again it appears that asking about issues as well as candidates slightly dampens television's lead over newspapers.

National candidates and issues:	*11/76* %
Television	68
Newspapers	24
Magazines	8
Radio	5
People	4
Other	1
Total mentions	110

All of the variations of questions asked over the years on sources of information in elections have confirmed the findings of the first versions used in the past. Newspapers appear to be the most important medium in local elections, although television is rising. Television leads other media fairly strongly in state elections, and is the dominant medium in national elections. When candidates *and* issues are asked about, television is slightly less strong relative to newspapers than when candidates alone are asked about.

III

Media in a Period Of Social Change

The past eighteen years have been years of both social change and turmoil. Most institutions of society have been increasingly criticized and challenged. A question asked in every study has given an overview of how well newspapers and television are regarded at the local level when compared with two other community institutions: schools and government. In 1974, and again in this study, we also asked about two other local institutions: churches and police. People were asked separately about each:

> *"In every community, the schools, the newspapers, the television stations, the local government, each has a different job to do. Would you say that the local schools (the ones you are familiar with) are doing an excellent, good, fair, or poor job? How about the local (newspapers, etc.)—are they (the one(s) you are familiar with) doing an excellent, good, fair, or poor job?"*

Television stations continue to hold a commanding lead on good performance over the three other community institutions against which they have been measured since 1959. Television stations took the lead over other community institutions in 1967, and showed a marked rise between 1972 and 1974. This year shows television stations holding their lead, and they continue to be the *only* one of the four community institutions held in higher regard than in 1959, while all three others are down. Local government shows an improved reading this year compared with the past six years and newspapers have shown gains since hitting their low point in 1971.

In the current study, as in 1974, while one-quarter rate television's performance as less than good, very few low-rate it as poor—5%. Only churches rival it on this low "poor" rating. All others have a higher "poor" rating, ranging from 13% for local governments down to 7% for newspapers.

		Percent considering the performance as:		
		Excellent or good	*Fair or poor*	*Don't know or no answer*
		%	%	%
Television stations	11/76	70	25	5
	11/74	71	25	4
	11/72	60	36	4
	1/71	59	36	5
	11/68	57	36	7
	1/67	64	30	6
	11/64	62	28	10
	11/63	60	31	9
	11/61	57	34	9
	12/59	59	32	9
Churches	11/76	66	20	14
	11/74	66	20	14
Police	11/76	65	29	6
	11/74	65	29	6
Newspapers	11/76	59	35	6
	11/74	58	36	6
	11/72	51	43	6
	1/71	48	46	6
	11/68	51	41	8
	1/67	59	34	7
	11/64	55	36	9
	11/63	55	36	9
	11/61	59	32	9
	12/59	64	30	6
Schools	11/76	47	36	17
	11/74	50	30	20
	11/72	50	35	15
	1/71	50	37	13
	11/68	58	29	13
	1/67	61	25	14
	11/64	62	22	16
	11/63	61	24	15
	11/61	61	25	14
	12/59	64	26	10
Local government	11/76	41	48	11
	11/74	36	52	12
	11/72	37	53	10
	1/71	34	55	11
	11/68	41	47	12
	1/67	45	42	13
	11/64	47	38	15
	11/63	43	43	14
	11/61	45	42	13
	12/59	44	43	13

Time Devoted to Opinion on the Air

Since 1971 we have asked a question on the amount of time television devotes to opinion. During that time, few have criticized television for providing too much time for the expression of opinion. Three times as many say they would like more time devoted to opinions as said less time. Half feel there is about the right amount devoted to such material. The fact that the "too much" percentage is up a little and the "too little" percentage is down suggests that the current amount of opinion on television is more publicly acceptable than it has been in any of the previous measures.

"In its news programs, discussion shows and interviews, television devotes a certain amount of time to opinions—opinions of community leaders, leaders of organizations, politicians and just average citizens. Do you think television devotes too much, too little, or about the right amount of time to having people express their opinions on the air?"

	11/71 %	11/72 %	11/74 %	11/76 %
Too much time to opinion	9	9	8	11
Too little time to opinion	31	36	39	32
About the right amount	51	47	45	50
DK/NA	9	8	8	7

The Question of Government Control over Programs

Since 1963 a question has been asked about government control over television programs. Between 1963 and 1974 there was increasing sentiment for *less* control. This year there is a drop-off in this opinion, with a concurrent rise in the minority who want more government control over programs. While the most prevalent position continues to be that there should be less government control, the margin of lead for this opinion has narrowed.

"There has been some talk recently about the government paying more attention to what kinds of programs are shown on television and being more critical of what should and should not be shown. Some people are in favor of this as a way of ensuring high quality television programming. Others are opposed to it on the grounds that it would result in television programs which the government, but not necessarily the public, would like. How

about you—do you think: the government should exercise more control over what programs are on TV, or there is about the right amount of government control of TV programming now, or the government should have less control over what programs are on TV?"

	11/63 %	11/64 %	1/67 %	1/71 %	11/72 %	11/74 %	11/76 %
The government should exercise more control over what programs are on TV	16	19	18	12	17	15	24
There is about the right amount of government control of TV programming now	43	41	40	48	38	36	34
The government should have less control over what programs are on TV	27	26	28	31	39	41	36
DK/NA	14	14	14	9	6	8	6

IV

Attitudes Toward Programs And Commercials

Broadcasters must not only cope with the problem of providing television programs that are entertaining, they must also offer an appropriate amount of program content that reflects society as it is today. Two new questions in this year's study explore public opinion in this area. They covered much-discussed aspects of television program content: (1) how women are portrayed on television, and (2) the possible linkage between youthful aggression and hostility and violent action in television entertainment programs.

Women as Portrayed on Television

Clearly, women as shown in television programs are not considered behind the times. Opinion divides almost equally between the positions that women are portrayed as more liberated than they are today and that they are portrayed realistically. Men are exactly divided on these viewpoints, while women are slightly more inclined to think women are portrayed as more liberated than they, in fact, are.

"There's been a lot of talk recently about the role and position of women in our society. Thinking of the television programs on these days, would you say that most television programs show women as more old fashioned than they are today, or show them as more liberated than they are today, or show them pretty much as they are today?"

	12/76		
	Total sample %	*Men* %	*Women* %
More old fashioned	3	2	4
More liberated	46	45	47
Pretty much as they are	44	45	43
DK/NA	7	8	6

Violence on Television

There has been increasing criticism in recent years of the amount of violence in television programs, with a specific charge that it leads to violence by children who see such programs. In order to determine how people would position violence on television as one of a number of possible causes of violence in children, a new question was asked in the current study. Results show that the public—including parents of young children—ranks television a relatively low fourth (fifth in the case of parents of younger children) out of the seven possible causes asked about, with lack of discipline at home seen as the leading cause by far. Also more widely perceived than television as a cause of violence in children are broken homes and too much freedom.

"Turning now to another subject, there are some children who are overly aggressive, abusive or hostile toward other people. Many causes have been suggested for this. From observations of your own children or other children you know, which of these things, if any, do you think are the main causes of some children being more aggressive and abusive than they should be?" (Card shown respondent)

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	Total sample	Parents of children		
		Under 6 years old only	Both under and over 6 years old	6-16 years old only
	%	%	%	%
a. Not enough discipline at home	79	78	79	85
f. They come from an unhappy or broken home	45	49	48	43
g. They have too much free time and not enough to do	43	31	45	52
d. They see too much fighting and other kinds of violent action in television entertainment programs	39	38	38	39
c. They're that way because their parents are aggressive and abusive	34	40	39	31
b. Not enough discipline at school	32	20	32	35
e. Some children are born that way	9	6	8	10
None	1	-	-	-
DK/NA	2	2	1	1

Children's Television Programs

In a special study in July 1975, and again in this study, a question was asked to find out whether the public believes children's television programs have improved over the past two or three years. As in 1975, the public is more inclined to think children's programs have improved than to think they have declined in quality or stayed the same. Parents of young children are particularly inclined to see an improvement in children's programs.

"On the whole, do you think that children's television programs—those for children under 12—are better than they were two or three years ago, not as good as they were, or are just about the same?"

	Total sample		Parents of children					
			Under 6 only		Both under and over 6*		6-16 only*	
	7/75 %	12/76 %	7/75 %	12/76 %	7/75 %	12/76 %	7/75 %	12/76 %
Better now	29	29	44	46	38	38	28	32
Not as good now	19	21	16	21	22	28	23	26
About the same	25	27	28	23	34	31	34	32
DK/NA	27	23	12	16	6	3	15	10

Attitudes Toward Commercials

Past studies have shown that most people accept the concept of having commercially-sponsored television. A question designed to determine attitudes toward this concept has consistently shown a large majority favorable toward it. While this is still true by a margin of more than three-and-one-half to one, the minority disagreeing with the concept shows a sharp rise in this study, to the highest percentage yet shown.

"Different people have all sorts of things, both good and bad, to say about TV commercials—for example—that they are in poor taste, that they are informative, that they are amusing, that there are too many of them, etc. Now, everything considered, do you agree or disagree that having commercials on TV is a fair price to pay for being able to watch it?"

	11/63 %	11/64 %	1/67 %	11/68 %	1/71 %	11/72 %	11/74 %	11/76 %
Agree	77	81	80	80	80	81	84	74
Disagree	14	10	9	10	10	14	12	20
DK/NA	9	9	11	10	10	5	4	6

*The July 1975 tabulations were of people with children up to age 12 only, while in this study they were of people with children up to age 16.

Commercials in Children's Programs

Because of proposals that commercials in children's programs be completely eliminated, questions have been included since 1972 specifically asking about such commercials. The majority, including parents of young children, continues to think it is all right to have them, by nearly two-and-one-half to one. Opinion on this is unchanged since 1974.

"Now I'd like to ask you about commercials on children's television programs—and I mean all kinds of children's programs. Some people think there should be no commercials in any kind of children's programs because they feel children can be too easily influenced. Other people, while perhaps objecting to certain commercials, by and large see no harm in them and think children learn from some of them. How do you feel—that there should be no commercials on any children's programs, or that it is all right to have them?"

	Total sample			*Parents of children*								
				Under 6 only			*Both under and over 6*			*6-16 only*		
On children's programs:	*11/72* %	*11/74* %	*11/76* %	*11/72* %	*11/74* %	*11/76* %	*11/72* %	*11/74* %	*11/76* %	*11/72* %	*11/74* %	*11/76* %
Should be no commercials	32	27	26	39	34	35	37	31	30	31	27	27
All right to have them	60	63	63	58	65	62	62	66	65	64	67	65
DK/NA	8	10	11	3	1	3	1	3	5	5	6	8

To test the strength of negative feelings, respondents who answered "no commercials" have been asked an additional question. For the first time, more of the small group who answered "no commercials" would give up some programs to get rid of the commercials rather than keep the commercials to keep the programs.

"If eliminating commercials on children's TV programs meant considerably reducing the number of children's programs, which would you favor. . . ."

	1/71 %	11/72 %	11/74 %	11/76 %
Eliminating the commercials and considerably reducing the number of children's programs, or	**43**	**38***	**35***	**54***
Keeping the commercials to keep the children's programs?	**47**	**53**	**54**	**38**
DK/NA	**10**	**9**	**11**	**8**

Since the amount of commercial time permitted in children's weekend television programs by the industry's Television Code Authority has been reduced by 41% in the past three or four years, in this year's study a question was included to determine public awareness of this fact. Clearly, this is not known to the large majority. Over four in ten said they didn't know enough to make a judgment, and only 3% think there is less commercial time compared with 36% who think there is more time. Furthermore, while parents of young children are less inclined to say they are unable to make a judgment, those who do express an opinion overwhelmingly think there is more commercial time rather than less—the opposite of the facts.

"We'd like your estimate of the amount of time for commercials and announcements on children's television programs now as compared with three or four years ago. We're talking about daytime programs on Saturdays and Sundays. Do you think there's a lot more time for commercials and announcements now than then, a little more time, about the same amount of time, a little less time, or a lot less time now than then, or don't you know enough about commercials in children's programs to make a judgment?"

*This represented 12% of the total sample in 1972, 9% of the total sample in 1974, and 14% of the total sample in 1976.

	Total sample	*Parents of children*		
		Under 6 only	*Both under and over 6*	*6-16 only*
	%	%	%	%
A lot more time now	25	37	31	33
A little more time now	11	15	15	15
About the same amount	18	19	31	22
A little less time now	2	3	6	2
A lot less time now	1	2	1	-
DK/NA	43	24	16	28

The conclusions we drew after examining the results of the 1974 study with regard to commercially sponsored television continue to hold valid on the basis of the latest results, but with some modifications:

(1) The American public continues its strong endorsement of the commercially sponsored system of broadcasting, but less than in past years.

(2) While criticism of some aspects of television's performance exists, the critics are in the minority—although the minority appears, in certain instances, to be increasing somewhat.

(3) Most, including critics, agree that having commercials is a fair price to pay for getting their programs, but the level of agreement is not quite as high as in earlier studies.

V

How the Study was Conducted

The Television Information Office indicated the areas or subjects it wished to have covered in this year's study. The Roper Organization assumes full responsibility for the wording of the questions, the study design, and for the analysis of results included in this report.

This year the study was conducted in two sets of questions. All trend questions, including those on hours of viewing and the election, were included in a ROPER REPORTS study that was in the field in mid-November following the Presidential election. As in previous surveys, the early questions in the questionnaire dealt with the various media (newspapers, television, magazines, radio). Later the interview focused on television itself. This approach was used so that answers to the earlier questions would not be biased for or against television.

The second set of questions, mainly new ones that had not been asked before, was included in the ROPER REPORTS study that was in the field in early December.

A multistaged, stratified, area probability sample is used for ROPER REPORTS, as in the earlier TIO studies. It is a nationwide cross section of the non-institutionalized population 18 years and older living in the Continental United States. It is representative of all ages 18 and over, all sizes of community, geographic areas and economic levels. In each study— November and December—2,000 personal interviews were conducted by experienced, trained interviewers.

The samples since 1971 have included 18 to 20 year olds because of the lowering of age limits for voting. It was determined through weighting procedures and retabulating that inclusion of this younger group did not affect results in total. This means that trend differences found in the studies are meaningful, and *are* due to changes in attitude of the population as a whole.

BURNS W. ROPER, Chairman
The Roper Organization, Inc.

BURNS W. ROPER, board chairman of The Roper Organization, Inc., has 32 years of experience in conducting research. His father, the late Elmo Roper, was until his death a director of the firm. The organization conducts custom research studies for a variety of individual clients. In addition, it has a subscription research service, ROPER REPORTS, which ten times each year monitors public opinion on a range of social, political and economic issues and is subscribed to by government agencies, trade and professional associations, leading firms in American industry and advertising agencies.

THE TELEVISION INFORMATION OFFICE was established in 1959 by the National Association of Broadcasters to serve as a two-way bridge between the television industry and its many publics. The Office provides reference and information services; publicizes programs of special interest; conducts research on public attitudes toward television; and issues publications and audiovisual materials on the structure and operation of the industry. It receives financial support from commercial and educational television stations, the three commercial networks and the National Association of Broadcasters.

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